



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**EVENT: Indictment**

**Defendant: Talal Khalil Chahine**

**LASHISH OWNER INDICTED IN CITIZENSHIP FRAUD CONSPIRACY  
INVOLVING FBI/CIA EMPLOYEE AND MARINE CORPS CAPTAIN**

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Talal Khalil Chahine, 52, formerly of Dearborn Heights, Michigan and the owner of the La Shish chain of Middle Eastern restaurants, was indicted by a federal grand jury sitting in Detroit today on citizenship fraud conspiracy charges involving former FBI Agent and CIA employee Nada Nadim Prouty, his wife, Elfat El Aouar, and U.S. Marine Corps Captain Samar Khalil Spinelli, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Special Agent Maurice Aouate of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division.

The Indictment charges that from April 13, 1990 to the present, Talal Chahine conspired with Nada Nadim Prouty, Elfat Nadim El Aouar and others to defraud the United States of valuable benefits of U.S. citizenship and to commit Marriage Fraud, Naturalization Fraud,

Perjury, False Statements in Naturalization Proceedings, Use of Fraudulently Procured Proof of U.S. citizenship, False Statements to Government Agents, Passport Fraud and Unauthorized Computer Access. Specifically, the Indictment charges, Talal Chahine assisted illegal alien Nada Prouty in penetrating the Federal Bureau of Investigation and, later, the Central Intelligence Agency. Prouty later made unlawful accesses into the FBI's classified computer data bases to query information about herself, Talal Chahine, Elfat El Aouar and the terrorist organization, Hizballah. Nada Prouty pleaded guilty to the conspiracy on November 13, 2007; Elfat El Aouar pleaded guilty to the conspiracy on November 28, 2007; and Samar Spinelli pleaded guilty to the conspiracy on December 4, 2007.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "With so many honest and hard-working immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship, with all the rights and privileges that confers, we cannot permit those who obtain this precious right by fraud to remain unchallenged. Many people consider marriage fraud a social issue, but since September 11<sup>th</sup> it has become a security issue. My office is committed to fighting marriage fraud and visa fraud and bring those who commit these crime to justice."

Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement who stated that, "becoming an American citizen is privilege not a right." "We will not tolerate those who pledge their allegiance to this nation knowing that the oath they took was achieved through lies and fraud. ICE Special Agents will work with our partners in the U.S. Attorney's Office to ensure that those privileges are removed."

Chahine faces a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine on the Conspiracy charge. An Indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Chahine is currently a fugitive believed to be in Lebanon. He, along with his wife, Elfat El Aouar, were charged in 2006 in the Eastern District of Michigan with tax evasion in connection with a scheme to conceal more than \$20 million in cash received by La Shish restaurants and to route funds to persons in Lebanon. Last month, Chahine was also charged

in the Eastern District of Michigan, along with a senior ICE official in Detroit and others in a bribery and extortion conspiracy in which federal immigration benefits were allegedly awarded to illegal aliens in exchange for money.

In announcing the Indictment, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Internal Revenue Service, the Diplomatic Security Service, U.S. Department of State, and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service all of whom participated in the joint investigation. Mr. Murphy also expressed his gratitude to the United States Marine Corps for its excellent cooperation in the investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Eric M. Straus, Chief of the National Security Unit, and Kenneth R. Chadwell, Assistant U.S. Attorney, from the U.S. Attorney's office for the Eastern District of Michigan, as well as Mark J. Jebson, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney and Senior Assistant Chief Counsel for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.